The Finance Committee of the Council of the Village of Monroeville met on Wednesday, August 23, 2022, at 6:00 PM, in Council Chambers at the MMC. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the wage ordinance structure, and any other financial issues to come before them.

Present were: Committee members Chris Raftery, Joe Galea and Sam Wiley, and Fiscal Officer Bonnie Beck. Also attending were: Mayor Fries-Seip, Tom Gray, Craig Franklin, Bob Whitacre, Sue Rogers, Ann Beck, Heather Alicea, Gary Lyons and Troy Kimball.

Chris opened the meeting by acknowledging the work that Bonnie and the department heads did in putting together the wage information that was previously distributed to Council via e-mail. Chris asked if there are any areas that Council needs to review. The Mayor asked if there needs to be a range at the base level, if someone comes in with more experience than what the base level requires. Would they automatically jump to another tier or not. Bonnie said entry level is for a brand-new employee and if the employee comes in with experience, they could be put at a different grade level and still be required to follow the mandatory probationary period. The Mayor asked what happens if there is case where the person is skilled enough to have experience, but not to enter in at the next grade level or tier. The Mayor asked if we need to get rid of the range at the bottom as opposed to just having a starting salary. For example, the Police Department, having a bachelor’s degree would give them more than just entry level with nothing else. Bonnie explained there’s nothing in the wage ordinance that has to do with college degrees and she asked if that is something that Council is going to add to the Ordinance. The Mayor said not necessarily, it was just brought up to give some kind of a credit towards experience the person can already offer. Bonnie said Wes was re-hired and slotted right into the Assistant Superintendent position because of his past experience, and still on a one-year probationary period. The Mayor asked had Wes not had the licensure but the experience, would he have been put at the entry base pay level or would he have been given more. Bonnie said one of the Superintendents explained to her that if an employee is not doing what they should be doing at the end of their probationary period, they won’t advance to the next level and will probably be let go. According to policy, the Village doesn’t give probationary employees pay increases. Bonnie said the question the Mayor is asking will be up to Council to determine. The Mayor said the employee could be entry level, get off of probation and if everyone gets a raise, that employee will get an increase as well. Bonnie said when an employee comes off probation, they are usually moved up to the next level. The Village has never kept any employees at entry level once they’ve passed their probation. The Mayor asked in water and wastewater, where they need certifications to get to the next level, what happens to them. Bonnie said that is except for Grade 1, as they don’t need any licensures to get into Grade 1. Sam said they have to get one within four years. Bonnie verified, and said for each classification in the water department, it’s very specific about the licensures that are needed. To go from the entry level to Grade 1, an employee doesn’t need any licensures. They would only need to pass the lab certification. Sam said they can be in grade 1 for four years and then are expected to get a Class 1 license. Joe said he supposed the question is, for those that do the hiring, is a range necessary. Joe sad he understands Bonnie’s feelings, but asked Tom and Gary what they think. Bonnie said Council took away the entry level for the PD. Tom said he agrees with Bonnie and Bonnie confirmed that is what the wage ordinance states. Bonnie didn’t mean to imply it came from her; she is taking it per information she received from the Superintendents. Joe asked hypothetically, if Ann or Heather had to be replaced, would Bonnie feel comfortable starting someone at the entry level. Bonnie verified, as the Village has fewer employees than most. Gary said in regards to the wording under the Police Officer section, it states the following: “Newly employed full-time officers shall be subject to a six-month probationary period, which may be extended for ninety (90) additional days at the discretion of the Chief of Police”. Gary doesn’t think the ORC gives him that discretion. Bonnie said she talked to Jim Barney about that, and Jim did quite a bit of research. The ORC says six months, but if there isn’t an affirmative motion to move forward, then the employee stays on a probation. Gary asked if that can be changed to “mutually agreed upon” between the employee and the Chief of Police. Bonnie advised if a mutual agreement is being sought, the wording would need to be discussed with Jim. Bonnie said she completely understands that for a full-time position, but as she e-mailed Council before, the policy passed two years ago refers to a minimum of 4oo hours to be worked before the employee comes off probation. Jim reviewed it before when it was presented to Council and Council approved it. Bonnie said Jim likes the language and is going to recommend to his other municipalities. Gary asked if what Bonnie is suggesting is that if the part-time officer doesn’t have 400 hours in, a mutual agreement would continue the probationary period. Bonnie verified and said Gary can discuss it further with Jim. Gary said one more area is the Lieutenant description. That language was prior to covid and it’s been nearly impossible to get any kind of supervisory training. The language says: “Prior to completion of the required six-month probationary period, the Lieutenant must successfully complete the supervisory and administrative training as assigned by the Chief of Police and approved by Council”. Gary asked if that language can be moved somewhere else or taken out. Gary said it’s very hard to get someone through training or the PELC program in a six-month period. Troy has done mid-level supervision school, but Gary couldn’t get him to the upper-level supervision class or PELC. Bonnie asked Gary if he wants that sentence removed. Gary confirmed and Council agreed. Bonnie said the Electric Department has an additional level. They have a Grade 4, year 5, before hitting the Superintendents position and the wages need to be addressed a little bit more. Bonnie asked Tom if he wanted those to marry up with the Water Department positions. Tom agreed and said he wanted to dovetail off of the Water division. Bonnie said Don would like to add another grade level as well. Once an employee gets into the Grade 5, they can’t automatically go into the Assistant Superintendent position, because with their certifications or licenses, they have to have a certain amount of time in the plant itself. This gives the employee time to get their hours in the plant and to make the determination that they want to be an Operator of Record. Chris asked about the wages that need adjusted for the Electric Department. Bonnie confirmed, as she’s not comfortable with the top level of the one grade being the bottom level of the next grade. Chris advised that being said, the Superintendent of the Electric Department should move up to the top end of $38.00, as comparable to the Water Department Superintendent. Bonnie said the Electric Department also has to have a certain number of years in the position, in addition to their Journeyman Lineman training, before they can move up. Bonnie said as she mentioned in her e-mail, she, Tom and Don all agreed to remove Rick Whiteside from the pay ranges and create a position for him, since he won’t be getting any morelicensures. Council agreed with that. Joe asked if the Water/Wastewater Distribution Worker is the same the Utility Worker and Bonnie advised no, it’s two different positions. Discussion regarding the pay ranges for the water/wastewater grades. Gary gave a handout to Council and those in attendance. The handout showed a wage increase proposal for a part-time Police Officer for year 2023, with a starting hourly wage of $15.00 per hour/$16.00 per hour once off probation/$16.50 per hour with 300 hours of work from start date/$17.00 per hour with 600 hours of work from start date/$18.00 per hour with over 1000 hours from start date, as well as time-and-a-half for holidays worked and shift premiums being the same as a full-time officer. Chris asked Gary if this is the same proposal that he presented previously. Gary said it’s a modification, as the prior proposal was over a three-year period. To Gary’s knowledge, the high end should only include one person, Curtis Silvers and everyone else would be in the lower end. Sam said the information they currently have is a proposed range of $15.00-$17.50 while Gary’s proposal shows $15.00-$18.00. Sam said he thinks Gary’s proposal will work, at $18.00 instead of $17.50. Chris agreed with that. Chris asked Bonnie if that works for her. Bonnie said no, as it’s in regards to part-time employees. Bonnie said Ann has been here twenty-six years and will only be making $2.00 more than a part-time employee and again, there’s the disparity in the wage ordinance and that’s not fair. Bonnie said Heather’s been here almost two years and she wouldn’t being making much more than that either and she is a full-time employee. Gary said it’s more than fair. Gary said for starters, the part-time officers are putting their lives on the line. They have to go through extensive training, physical and academic training, just to get their certification and they work by themselves. Gary said he is trying to put this delicately, but he just doesn’t see the comparison between that and secretarial work. Bonnie advised no, we are not secretaries, she is sorry to interrupt, but we are not secretaries. Joe said Chief’s officers are part-time, but that’s not the same as being a part-time 7/11 worker or what not. Joe thinks being part-time confuses the issues. The part-time officer’s responsibilities and duties, threats to life and limb don’t change, whether they are a part-time officer or full-time police officer. He thinks those mis-numbers can go both ways and administrative work can devalue what the administrative staff does in their office and he is saying that as someone who has done administrative work for a long time. Joe said Council should change the title to Relief Officer as part-time is devaluing and makes it sound like an after-school job. Craig said the risks of the job are still the same. Gary said they can die just as easily as a full-time officer. Bonnie said the same could happen in the administrative office if we are dealing with an irate customer. Gary said the admin staff can always give the PD a call. Bonnie said the administrative staff can also work as a group and independently as well. Gary said he has to take offense to that. Bonnie said she does too, because it seems like there is sexual bias oozing out of all of this. Ann has been here over twenty years and Heather is going through every training that she possibly can to get her CMC and they are being ignored while the PD is getting regular pay increases. Bonnie said it reeks of sexual bias and she is very disappointed in that. Chris said we are living with a history of what Council has done in the past. The ranges were created and Council has adhered to them and maybe certain departments have been held down with the constraints of meeting the budget. Chris said they should give equal evaluation of all the departments and it doesn’t take away from the fact that the girls do their job as well. Chris said a compromise needs to be reached and everyone needs to be on an equal basis. Gary said in his eleven years here, he has never criticized any raise that Bonnie’s staff has gotten. Gary said he knows they work hard and he knows his guys work hard and their work is dangerous. Gary doesn’t understand the sexual bias, as he doesn’t put out wording that men only must apply. There’s been a female officer in the past and she was great and then she went to Norwalk. Gary said Council can pay the staff whatever they want, he doesn’t have a problem with that, but when he looks at Bonnie’s troops and then looks at his troops and he sees what they have to go through, the danger that they put themselves in everyday and what they have to do for training, being prepared to go to court and all the other things, he has to speak up for them and get them as much as he can. The only people that push against that are Bonnie and her people, not so much Heather as she hasn’t been here long enough, but Ann. He remembers trying to get a .25 increase for Nick Meyer due to him taking a high-liability firearms training and Ann tried to compare that to her learning Microsoft Office and Publisher. Ann said she doesn’t recall that at all, Bonnie agreed. Gary said he remembers and said that cut him to the core. Gary said he never talks against the admin staff and every time he talks about a raise for the PD, he gets push back. Ann said she doesn’t remember saying anything like that and the entire staff just got a $3.00 an hour increase. Ann said at the time, Gary had said that was more than he was originally asking for, but now, Gary is asking for more money on top of that and if that’s the case, it has to be looked at for everyone, that is her only concern. Ann said it’s great that the officers are taking training and learning more to help with their jobs, she has no problem with that. Gary said again, he asked for a .25 per hour raise for Nick and it didn’t sit well. Right after that, Ann and Deb Ewell got a $1.00 per hour raise. Gary said he didn’t complain about that at all, so where is the fairness. Gary apologized for being hot on this, but enough is enough. Gary said we talk about bias, but he gets push back every time. Bonnie said she is not the one who makes decisions, Council does, she just renders her opinion. Gary said he gives his opinion as well. Sam asked if we’re thinking the admin staff range should be along the same line as the Lieutenant range. Bonnie said no, she doesn’t think the position should be compared to any other position, but the admin staff does training as well and is exposed to hostile customers. For years, the admin positions have been let go. Bonnie previously asked for a wage increase for those positions because they were so far behind and they still are. Gary said he never objected to that. Sam said the admin ranges are similar to what the police officer ranges are and any higher would-be putting admin staff at the same range as a Lieutenant. Bonnie said let’s go back to Ann’s position for a minute. Ann’s been here for twenty-six years and she is at the low end of her pay range. Ann makes .50 less than Heather, who’s been here for two years, and Heather makes $19.75. Sam said there is room to bring Ann’s wages up. Bonnie said it’s her proposal to bring both Ann and Heather up. Chris likes Joe’s idea of switching the name of part-time officers, as it takes the stigma away. Chris and Sue said they have no problem with Gary’s proposal and Sue apologized to Bonnie. Joe said his thought is, they are setting ranges and either Council makes an across-the-board adjustment or individual adjustments. If Bonnie feels Ann or Heather needs an adjustment, then Council can consider that. Joe said the Village wouldn’t function without an Administrative Office and part-time officers. Joe advised that once the ranges are set, department heads can come before Council to request adjustments and recognize an employee’s service, while remaining cohesive and recognizing the challenges of everyone’s positions. Sue asked Bonnie how Ann and Heather step up in their positions. Bonnie said Ann is locked in her position and the step-up ranges are based on evaluations. Bonnie previously asked for a $2.00 increase for Ann and that was turned down by Council, who only gave her $1.00 instead. Chris said that’s a separate issue and Bonnie would need to present that in a Council meeting for consideration. Sam asked if the ranges work or do they need to be adjusted. Bonnie said no, the ranges are ok. Sam said Council just needs to get the individuals to where they need to be. Bonnie said that another thing with the Administrative Specialist position, is the CMC and MMC designation. Heather is working towards her CMC designation, which takes a minimum of four years to obtain because of all the necessary training. It’s another two years to get the MMC designation. Bonnie would like there to be pay increases that go along with those designations, just like what is done for the Electric and Water Departments. There are a lot of hours and work that goes into getting those certifications and Bonnie never received a pay increase when she received her designations. Heather and anyone else that comes along in the future need to be recognized for the dedication and hours that are put in. It’s required by the state to be a CMC, but it’s not required for the MMC. The State of Ohio requires Fiscal Officers to have a CMC designation. Chris said as a supervisor, Bonnie can present that to Council for recommendation. Bonnie said for the increases yes, but she would like to see it worked into the Ordinance, to cover those steps. Chris asked Bonnie to prepare verbiage for review so that it’s not forgotten. Sam suggested creating a grade for it, so that it’s not forgotten down the line. Tom said a set point was created and a road map needs to be created through the various grades and levels, taking into consideration the training that goes along with everything. It’s the key to the Village’s well-being and future. It gives stability to the three-year wage ordinance and allows for flexibility within those grades to not only provide a general increase with Council approval, but merit increases along the way. The stability that it provides hopefully is within the twenty-seven-, thirty-one and thirty-six-month range so that the Ordinance doesn’t have to change. Sam asked Gary if he is comfortable with the ranges. Gary confirmed and with the part-time staff, it’s indicative of what they do, along with the skills and dedication they contribute. Bonnie and Tom confirmed they are also good with the ranges. Bonnie said the language in the first two pages of the Ordinance still need addressed, such as the call-in time and college course reimbursement. The Mayor said she understands that both Bonnie and Gary are looking out for their departments and she appreciates that. The Mayor said she was caught off-guard by the comments about sexism. If there are issues that she’s not aware of, please let her know, as she hasn’t witnessed sexist behavior towards anyone of any opposite sex, whether it be men to women, or women to men. The Mayor appreciates all of the departments and wants to make sure any questionable behavior is brought to her attention. The Mayor said she would appreciate any further dialogue in regards to that and please make any further instances aware to Council. The Mayor said she has not seen that from any department. Gary asked if incentives can be brought forth to make employees stay, such as the longevity pay and the earned time. Gary would to see $2000 longevity cap be removed, being raised or adding a percentage at the end of it, for Ann’s sake and others as well. The PD has a hard time getting earned time in, right now it’s cash back with a max of 24 hours. Gary suggested removing that cap as well. Gary asked Council to consider both. The Mayor asked Bonnie if Ann’s beginning, part-time years contributed at all to Council’s slack with the pay scale or is it because they were paying everyone so low at the time. Bonnie said there’s always been someone in that position, so it wasn’t due to the part-time hours.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Alicea

Administrative Specialist